

**VSH Futures
Peer Support Program Development Workgroup**

**February 8, 2007
Minutes**

Next meeting: March 8, 2007 10:00 to 12:30
Location: Vermont Technical College, Old Dorm Lounge

Present:

Steven Morgan
Jean New
Ed Paquin
Beebe Potter
Keith Martell
Kitty Gallagher
Katelin Hoffman

Chair: Linda Corey

Staff: Judy Rosenstreich, VDH

Announcements/General Comments

Linda mentioned that VPS is getting a lot of calls with questions about local and regional services from the Agency of Human Services Peer Navigators. These navigators have been put in place to help people receiving services through the Agency of Human Services navigate the system.

To find out if the meeting has been cancelled, call the Vermont Psychiatric Survivors toll-free number -1-800-564-2106 and Linda will put a message on the VPS' answering machine.

Several members of the group requested that the minutes be mailed to each member of the group; some people did not receive minutes from the December 14, 2006 meeting.

Linda advised that the minutes are posted on the DMH website:

<http://healthvermont.gov/mh/futures/futureshome.aspx>

There were a few copies of the minutes available at today's meeting that were passed around; people took some time to review.

Ed/Jean moved/seconded to accept the minutes as written. All were in favor.

March 30 is Recovery Day at the Legislature. Location – Room 11. Contact Linda or Friends of Recovery-VT (Patty McCarthy - 1-802-229-6103) for more information. There will be a celebration in the cafeteria following the meeting in room 11. At 1:00 p.m. Ken Libertoff will do training on how to talk to your legislature. Parking is very limited. Carpooling is recommended. Instructions for accessing a free shuttle that takes people into downtown Montpelier is attached.

Conferences, Trainings and Important Events

Linda reviews information from various conferences and selects those that are most useful and affordable. Pat Deegan will be presenting a in Massachusetts this spring. Linda asked Steve to consider this one. In March there will be a 3-day conference at UMass on Mental Health Care. Marty Roberts will attend as she also has family there, which will offset the costs.

Liz Reardon is now working for UMass; she is no longer working for the State of Vermont.

March 29 is Disability Awareness Day at the Statehouse. It usually involves meetings and presentations. It may include a dinner.

The Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council will be inviting legislators over for a free dinner. Legislators sit with members of VLIAC. Presence of the mental health piece is important. Linda said it is really crucial for law makers to hear our voices as there is not that much money available.

Ed mentioned that Chambers of Commerce also hosts legislative breakfasts.

Linda said that she has received information that the federal government may be planning to cut peer programming. Linda can email the information if anyone requests it. The question of what we can do to advocate against this came up. Ed suggested that you get the word to your mental health agency directors, and they can often get through directly to congressmen Welch and develop a relationship.

Ted Mable meets with Franklin County legislative delegation. The delegation initially did not realize how many local people were employed by mental health programs.

The National coalition for peer support sends Linda and other leaders around the country legislative alerts. Laurie Speiro is the coordinator. Also, the 23-member organization has monthly conference calls with her.

Judy described the DMH plan to write a summary of the Recovery conference. This will feed into a working group that will apply recovery principles to the VSH Futures Concept of Operations.

VPS has hired 3 part-time peer positions

- Second-Spring – clinical steering committee
- At Second Spring itself
- VPS just hired a person for integrated services; peer piece came out of a conference we had in Killington.

As more and more of these opportunities for peer positions keep coming up, it becomes more of a challenge to fill these positions.

Jean asked Linda how she motivates other people to work with us. Linda says that she leads by example. As others see how we contribute, they become more open to involving peers. It is important to help people to find, hope – many of our peers used to be in institutions so it is a challenge to bring them into the process.

Northwest Counseling and Support Services has a great peer support group. They've learned that the peer piece is vital. Openness is key on the part of the agency. They have their role for acute care and crisis care. Keith is going to be a peer within and agency.

Linda noted that she has found that if agency staff and peers receive the same training, all can see, can talk together, train together and build understanding. You can see how the two programs can help each other.

Having a person appointed by the agency is also very helpful.

A lot of housing programs and crisis beds' proposals are moving towards peer support.

What's going to work in our different regions? They are all so different.

What is it that we need to do to help peers coming out of the state hospital?

Steve asked if there is any money for a peer group to do an initiative on their own without going through an agency.

Linda said money was in the Futures plan for peer initiatives. If someone can put in a good plan that is viable, there is a good chance it could gain support and funding. She added that working with an agency and helping people to develop their skills works a lot better than trying to do it independently with no help.

Steve commented that Brattleboro is completely vacant of services for peers. Both family members and consumers are interested in getting together to do something.

Linda added that the Recovery centers are a good location of peer support; most have a kitchen area, which enables gatherings for dinner and other possibilities.

Jean stated that LCMH is having a new group for family members to come together. This is outside of NAMI. Family members are very integral to recovery.

Linda distributed information on:

- 1) The Empowerment Center
- 2) NY State Peer Support Line

Vermont has a lot of good training ideas to consider. Both Washington County and Bennington County have training programs for warm lines.

Linda is hearing around the country that warm lines are reducing hospitalizations.

A lot has been learned about warm lines.

- People coming out of the hospital need a warm line
- It is important for the warm line staff to keep logs
- There are Liability factors
- Rights of confidentiality need to be followed
- We need to be sure to do not harm: we don't want to be traumatized by our peers either.
- Peers staffing warm lines need to do their own self-care too.
- It is important to have more than one person operating the warm line to avoid burnout

Some of our peers have the skills to do this while others haven't yet developed other skills. Some peers have already set up unofficial warm lines in their own home.

Steve suggested that a statewide website that listed all the peer positions available would be very helpful.

Linda said that VPS lists job opportunities on www.vtjob.com VPS has a posting list.

There is the Stepping Stones program in New Hampshire. Lauren Kimball who was there now works for National Empowerment Center. She lives in Windsor, VT and may be willing to talk with us.

Linda needs more input into what types of information and presentations the group wants to hear.

Steve was at the New York conference. The most significant thing was this program to teach cognitive skills to people with schizophrenia. This was the biggest thing that he took away from the conference.

Kitty has been to a few conferences. In New York, there are groups of peers who meet with their legislators. She would like to see something New England-wide.

Linda said VPS has lists of people who can talk to legislators. It's called the educator piece. When something comes up in the Legislature, they go to represent peers. Recently, the Legislature wanted a peer perspective on something, and she sent Xenia Williams to deliver the message.

Linda says that interested stakeholders do come together when there is an important issue to discuss. If there is a specific issue such as ECT and people want to become involved, VPS networks the people and then they get together to focus on their specific interest.

Lobbying can't be part of VPS' activities. It has to be done among the peers; otherwise, it would be considered lobbying and VPS could lose its funding. As a grassroots organization, VPS can call its people to advise them. E.g. 1) this is on its way; 2) this is what you should say; 3) this is when the Legislature is discussing it.

Ed recommends the group looks at the Stepping Stone Program in New Hampshire. They are independent from any state agency. It's all peers, and the peers have been through all kinds of training.

Next Steps:

The group needs to begin developing an initial draft of recommendations. We need to think about what we've heard at this meeting and prior meetings. Please send ideas for initial recommendations to VPS. Linda will share these with Nick and we can start developing an initial draft.

Beebe try to get in touch with her peer group at hear agency to get ideas from them.

Linda concluded by saying that there are already are a lot of programs out there in Vermont coming from a professional perspective. The workgroup recommendations need to be about a peer perspective, not another professional perspective that peers are signing onto. Remember this is our goal.

Agenda for Next meeting:

- Go over initial plan draft
- Discuss Who we would like to hear as a speaker
 - A New York program?
 - A New Hampshire program?

Beebe commented that we all have our own perceptions of what peer support is. There is also fear among agencies as to what peer support is. Beebe asked for a framework when she goes out into the community. Linda suggested bringing a peer with you.

Linda referenced material that defines peer support. Linda said peer support is kind of a cultural piece. Different communities are going to have to sit down and consider what they want to do. It's hard to define peers – even in our small state, we have to have

groups. For example, she is sure the Native Americans in Vermont would not like her going up there and telling them how a peer is defined.

Nobody can really define recovery. There is no one way. It is up to you to decide. The person decides how they are going to move forward. Individualized. For some it involves medication, for others it does not.

Meeting concluded 12:40 p.m.

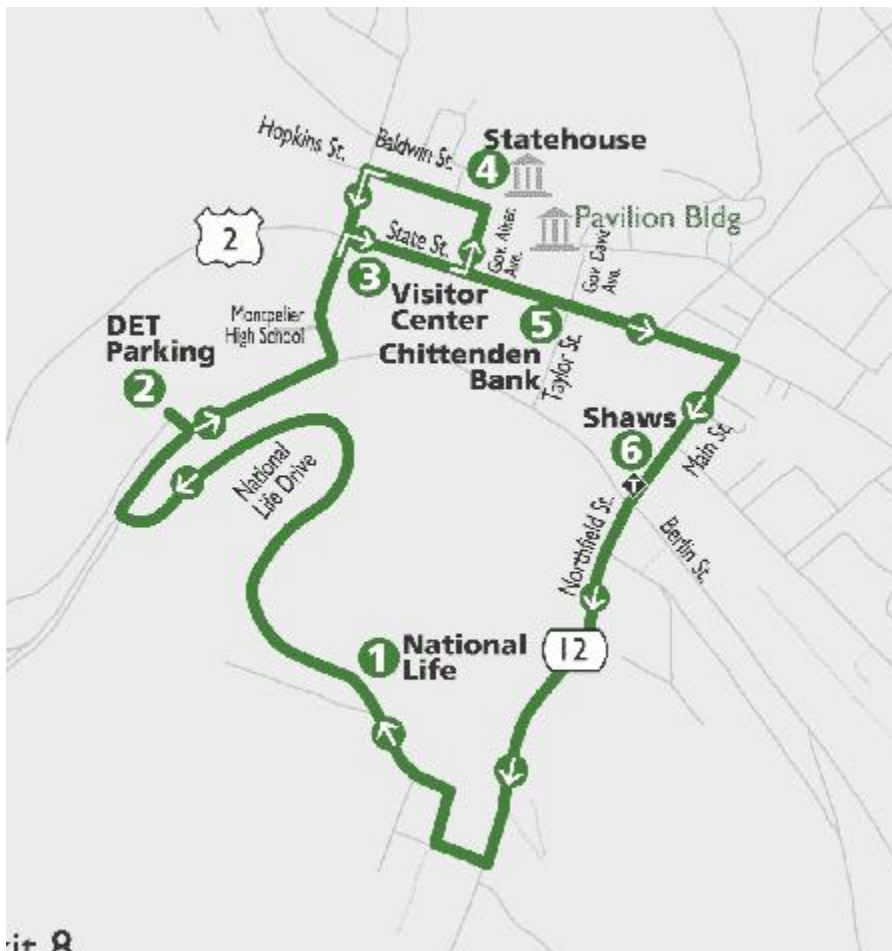
Shuttle Information for Getting into Downtown Montpelier

During the legislative session, if you are traveling to an event in downtown Montpelier, you are encouraged to take the free Capital Shuttle to avoid having to park in the downtown area. This shuttle will allow you to park your car at a park-and-ride location just off the interstate and get a free ride into downtown. Once you get off the interstate at the Montpelier exit, park your car at the Department of Labor/Department of Employment and Training (DET) parking lot (this will be on your left) and look for signs in the parking lot for the pick-up spot. See below for the route of the shuttle and pick up spots in downtown Montpelier.

Name of Route:

Capital Shuttle - Loop A

Description:



Timetable:

Capital Shuttle - Loop A

Dates of Operation:

Vermont Department of Health/Division of Mental Health

January 3rd to April 13, 2007

Bus will operate Tuesday through Friday from January 3 until April 13

Bus will operate Monday through Friday from April 16 until the service ends on May 11

Service will not operate Town Meeting Week, March 5th through 9th

National	D. E. T.	Visitor	State	Chittenden	Mont.	National
Life	Bus	Center	House	Bank	Shaw's	Life
North Ent.	Shelter		Baldwin St.	State St.	Main St.	North Ent.

AM

7:25	7:31	7:34	7:36	7:40	7:44	7:48
7:48	7:54	7:57	7:59	8:03	8:07	8:11
8:11	8:17	8:20	8:22	8:26	8:30	8:34
8:34	8:40	8:43	8:45	8:49	8:53	8:57
8:57	9:03	9:06	9:08	9:12	9:16	9:20
9:20	9:26	9:29	9:31	9:35	9:39	9:43
9:43	9:49	9:52	9:54	9:58	10:02	10:06
10:06	10:12	10:15	10:17	10:21	10:25	10:29
10:29	10:35	10:38	10:40	10:44	10:48	10:52
10:52	10:58	11:01	11:03	11:07	11:11	11:15
11:15	11:21	11:24	11:26	11:30	11:34	11:38
11:38	11:44	11:47	11:49	11:53	11:57	12:01
12:01	12:07	12:10	12:12	12:16	12:20	12:24
12:24	12:30	12:33	12:35	12:39	12:43	12:47
12:47	12:53	12:56	12:58	1:02	1:06	1:10
1:10	1:16	1:19	1:21	1:25	1:29	1:33
1:33	1:39	1:42	1:44	1:48	1:52	1:56
1:56	2:02	2:05	2:07	2:11	2:15	2:19

Vermont Department of Health/Division of Mental Health

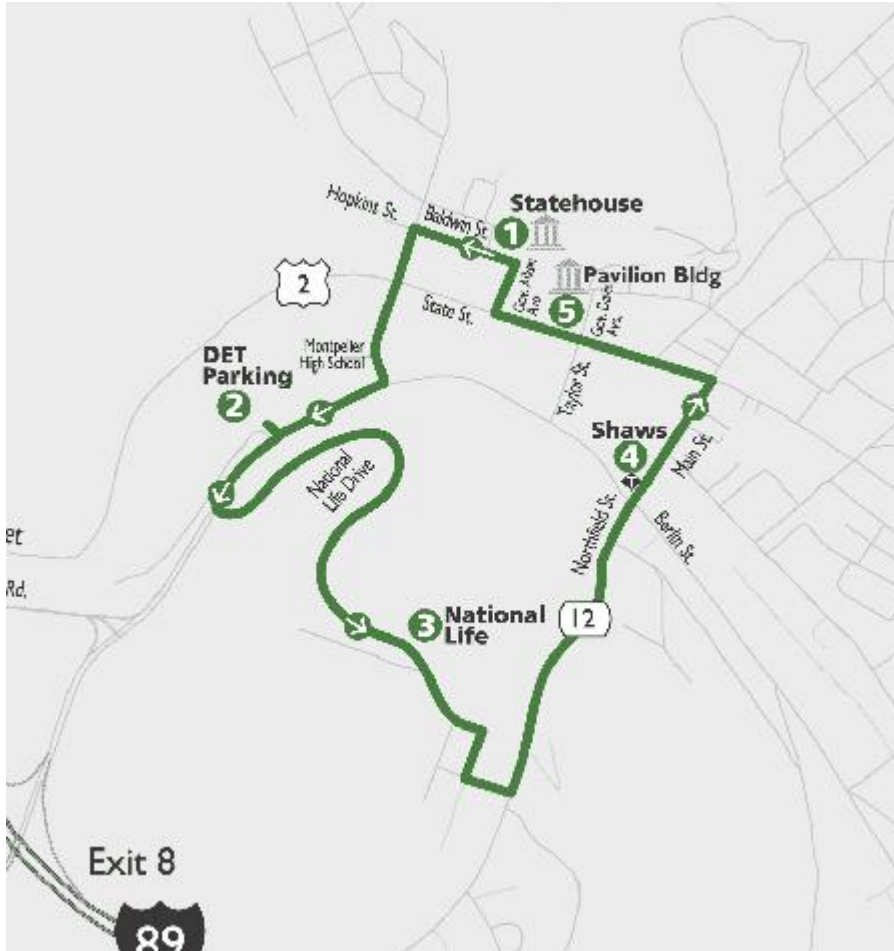
2:19	2:25	2:28	2:30	2:34	2:38	2:42
2:42	2:48	2:51	2:53	2:57	3:01	3:05
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3:28	3:34	3:37	3:39	3:43	3:47	3:51
3:51	3:57	4:00	4:02	4:06	4:10	4:14
4:14	4:20	4:23	4:25	4:29	4:33	4:37
4:37	4:43	4:46	4:48	4:52	4:56	5:00
5:00	5:06	5:09	5:11	5:15	5:19	5:23
5:23	5:29	5:32	5:34	5:38	5:42	5:46
5:46	5:52	5:55	5:57	6:01	6:05	6:09
6:09	6:15	6:18	6:20	6:24	6:28	6:32

THIS IS A FREE ROUTE.

This route will deviate upon request. Please call 802-223-7BUS (7287) for information.

Capital Shuttle - Loop B

Description:



Timetable:

Capital Shuttle - Loop B

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Bus will operate Monday through Friday from April 16 until the service ends on May 11

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Statehouse	D. E. T.	National	Mont.	Pavilion	Statehouse
Baldwin St	Bus Shelter	Life	Shaw's		Baldwin St.
			Main St.		

AM

Vermont Department of Health/Division of Mental Health

-	-	7:35	7:43	7:46	7:48
7:48	7:53	7:58	8:06	8:09	8:11
8:11	8:16	8:21	8:29	8:32	8:34
8:34	8:39	8:44	8:52	8:55	8:57
8:57	9:02	9:07	9:15	0:00	9:20
9:20	9:25	9:30	9:38	9:41	9:43
9:43	9:48	9:53	10:01	9:58	10:06
10:06	10:11	10:16	10:24	10:21	10:29
10:29	10:34	10:39	10:47	10:44	10:52
10:52	10:57	11:02	11:10	11:07	11:15
11:15	11:20	11:25	11:33	11:30	11:38
11:38	11:43	11:48	11:56	11:53	12:01
12:01	12:06	12:11	12:19	12:16	12:24
12:24	12:29	12:33	12:42	12:39	12:47
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1:33	1:38	1:43	1:51	1:48	1:56
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2:19	2:24	2:29	3:37	2:34	2:42
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3:28	3:33	3:38	3:46	3:43	3:51
3:51	3:56	4:01	4:09	4:06	4:14
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